

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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-----027916 302101Z /47

R 302116Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1461
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 15836

EXDIS

MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: GW US USSR MILI PARM
SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER APEL'S SPEECH TO SPD PARTY
MEETING ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE ISSUES

1. ALL MAJOR GERMAN PAPERS CARRIED FRONT PAGE ARTICLES
HIGHLIGHTING DEFENSE MINISTER HANS APEL'S SPEECH

GIVEN BEFORE A MEETING OF SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES
ATTENDING A SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE IN KASSEL.

2. DIE WELT RAN THE ARTICLE UNDER THE RUBRIC "APEL URGES
AMERICA TO PAY MORE CONSIDERATION TO EUROPE'S SECURITY
REQUIREMENTS;" THE FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU TITLED IT
"APEL DOESN'T TOTALLY TRUST SOVIET/AMERICAN SALT
NEGOTIATIONS;" WHILE THE SUD DEUTSCHE ZEITUNG RAN AS
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ITS SUBHEAD "APEL WARNS OF THE EAST'S MILITARY
POTENTIAL."

3. IN HIS SPEECH, APEL ARGUED THAT STRATEGIC STABILITY
ON A GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SCALE SHOULD NOT BE ACHIEVED
EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SUPERPOWERS. HE
URGED THE US TO LINK ITS INTERESTS AS A WORLD POWER MORE

INTIMATELY WITH THE OVER-ALL SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE.

4. HE POINTED OUT THAT AS THE US AND SOVIET UNION MOVE TOWARD STRATEGIC NUCLEAR PARITY, REGIONAL IMBALANCES IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND INTERMEDIATE-RANGE WOULD ASSUME "ALMOST STRATEGIC CONSEQUENCES" FOR EUROPE. APEL STRESSED MOSCOW'S IMPROVEMENT OF ITS INTERMEDIATE RANGE POTENTIAL THROUGH MOBILE SS-20 MISSILES AND BACKFIRE BOMBERS AND REITERATED THE WARSAW PACT'S GROWING SUPERIORITY IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS.

5. APEL FORESAW THAT THE TWO WORLD POWERS MIGHT, IN THE FUTURE, SEEK PARITY OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS, AND THAT THE US WOULD DO SO -- WITHOUT TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE SUPERIOR SOVIET POTENTIAL IN "GRAY AREA SYSTEMS" AND THE THREAT THAT THESE SYSTEMS POSE TO AMERICA'S NATO PARTNERS.

6. HE STATED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SEES THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE "GRAY AREA SYSTEMS" AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS OF THE ALLIANCE.

7. APEL SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH THE STRATEGIC WEIGHT OF THE SOVIET INTERMEDIATE SYSTEMS IS PRESENTLY NEUTRALIZED BY THE US STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY, THE MILITARY
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FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE BALANCE WILL "BASICALLY CHANGE" IN THE COMING YEARS; HENCE IT IS NECESSARY

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THAT IN SALT, THE TWO WORLD POWERS INCLUDE CONSIDERATION
OF INTERMEDIATE RANGE WEAPONS IN A SYSTEM OF OVER-ALL
STRATEGIC STABILITY.

8. APEL ALSO VOICED CRITICISM OF WEST EUROPEAN PARTNERS
AND THEIR LACK OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE NEEDS.
IN THIS CONNECTION HE IMPLIED THAT THEY HAD CONFUSED
DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH DISARMAMENT.

9. COMMENT: AS ALL ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, APEL'S SPEECH
MERELY GIVES PUBLIC EXPRESSION TO GERMAN CONCERNS OF
LONG STANDING. IT RECALLS CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S SPEECH TO
THE IISS LAST YEAR.

10. AN OFFICIAL CLOSE TO THE CHANCELLOR HAS TOLD US THAT
SCHMIDT DID NOT PERSONALLY APPROVE THE TEXT OF APEL'S
SPEECH NOR APEL'S GIVING THE SPEECH. WE ASSUME THIS
INFORMATION IS CORRECT, ALTHOUGH, IN THE LIGHT OF
SCHMIDT'S AND APEL'S INTIMATE RELATIONS, WE CANNOT
EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CHANCELLOR KNEW WHAT
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APEL WAS PLANNING TO SAY.

11. OF PERHAPS EQUAL SIGNIFICANCE IS THAT APEL'S
SPEECH FOLLOWED ON THE HEELS OF A SIMILAR STATEMENT
(TO BE REPORTED SEPTTEL) BY GENERAL WUST, INSPECTOR
GENERAL OF THE BUNDESWEHR. APEL MAY HAVE DECIDED THAT
HE NEEDED TO ISSUE A STATEMENT TO SUPPORT THE CONCERNS
VOICED BY HIS MILITARY.

12. UNFORTUNATELY, APEL'S STATEMENT DOES NOT INDICATE
THAT GERMAN CONCERNS ARE BEING RECOGNIZED AND HANDLED
WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, AND THAT THE US HAS GIVEN CONSIDER-
ABLE WEIGHT TO GERMAN ATTITUDES. IN
CONVERSATIONS WITH GERMAN OFFICIALS HERE, WE WILL MAKE
CLEAR THAT, AS THEY WELL KNOW, WE ARE HIGHLY
SENSITIVE TO FRG CONCERNS AND HAVE BEEN TAKING THEM
SERIOUSLY.

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